

DGuzik 31 Obadiah

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Book 31 of Bible Commentary:
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calibre 1.20.0

(Oba 1:1)

God's Judgment on Edom

The vision¹ that Obadiah² saw.³

The Lord GOD⁴ says this concerning⁵ Edom:⁶

Edom's Approaching Destruction

We have heard a report from the LORD.

An envoy was sent among the nations, saying,⁷

"Arise! Let us make war against Edom!"⁸

(Guzik)

Oba 1:1-21

OBADIAH - JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL'S BROTHER

A. Judgment against Edom.

1. (Oba_1:1-4) Obadiah announces judgment against Edom and her pride.

The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom (We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has

been sent among the nations, *saying*, "Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"): "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, *you* who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; *you* who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?' Though you ascend *as* high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," says the LORD.

a. **The vision of Obadiah:** The Hebrew name **Obadiah** means “Worshipper of Yahweh” or “Servant of Yahweh.” There

are 13 “Obadiahs” in the Old Testament, and one of these may be the Obadiah who wrote this book.

- An Obadiah was an officer in King Ahab of Israel’s court and hid God’s prophets in a cave (1Ki_18:3)

- An Obadiah was sent out by King Jehoshaphat of Judah to teach the law in the cities of Judah (2Ch_17:7)

- An Obadiah was one of the overseers who helped repair the temple in the days of Josiah, King of Judah (2Ch_34:12)

- An Obadiah was a priest in the days of Nehemiah (Neh_10:5)

b. **Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom:** Obadiah’s prophecy is unique because he doesn’t deal with Judah or

Israel much at all. His focus is on the sin of Edom and the judgment coming upon them. Who were the Edomites?

- The Edomites are the people descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the brother of Jacob

(Gen_25:19-34). Esau was nicknamed “Edom” (which means, “red”) probably because he had red hair

- Esau eventually settled in the area of Mount Seir and absorbed a people known as the Horites (Gen_36:8-43, which

refers to Edomite rulers as *dukes* in the King James Version; Deu_2:12)

- When Israel came out of Egypt and wanted to pass through the land of the Edomites to enter into the Promised Land, the Edomites wouldn’t let them (Num_20:14-21)

- The Edomites opposed Saul and were conquered under David and Solomon (1Sa_14:47, 2Sa_8:14, 1Ki_9:26)

- In the days of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Edom joined with Moab and Ammon to attack Judah, but the Lord

fought for Judah and defeated them (2Ch_20:1-27, the famous battle that was led with praise)

- The Edomites successfully rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah (2Ki_8:16-22)

- King Amaziah of Judah brought them back under subjugation (2Ki_14:9-11)

- The Edomites again attacked Judah in the days of King Ahaz (2Ch_28:17)

- Centuries later, King Herod the Great (Luk_1:5) was an Edomite

- They fought side by side with the Jews the rebellion against Rome in 66-70 A.D. and were crushed by Rome, never to be heard of as a people again. The predictions of Oba_1:10; Oba_1:18 were proven true

c. **Concerning Edom:** Because of what this book says of Edom and Jerusalem, we can gather a date for Obadiah's ministry. The only time markers we have in the book are the attack against Jerusalem (Oba_1:10-14) and the fact that this

passage also seems to indicate that Edom was not under Judah's rule at the time.

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2Ch_21:16-17 describes an attack against Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoram (848-841 B.C.) by the Philistines and the Arabians.

- 2 Kings 24, 25 describe the attack of the Babylonians against Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

- i. Probably the better choice is the earlier attack, because Oba_1:10-14 doesn't seem to indicate that Jerusalem was totally destroyed, as it was under the Babylonian attack. If Obadiah's prophecy considers this time period under Jehoram (848-841 B.C.), it makes him a contemporary of the prophet Elisha and also makes him the earliest of the

prophets, probably beating Joel by a few years. It also means that this Prophet Obadiah *may* be the same man mentioned in 2Ch_17:7.

d. **A report from the LORD . . . Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle:** Obadiah receives a “news bulletin” from the LORD. “This just in - God is bringing nations against Edom in battle.” As a result of the coming battle,

God will **make** Edom **small among the nations** and **greatly despised**.

e. **The pride of your heart has deceived you:** This helps explain *why* God is bringing judgment against Edom. They are filled with **pride**, and it **has deceived** them.

i. **Pride** is very *deceptive*. It makes us think things about ourselves and others that simply are not true. The Edomites were not the last people **deceived** by **pride**.

f. **You who dwell in the clefts of the rock:** The Edomites didn’t have all that much to be proud about. They were a small, relatively poor and insignificant nation. Yet what they could be proud about, they were - they lived in an area of great natural fortifications and strength, so they boasted in the **clefts of the rock** around them.

i. **Though you exalt yourself as high as the eagle:** And boast they did! Pride is so ingrained in fallen human nature that even if we don’t have much to be proud about, we’ll find *something* to exalt our self. This also reminds us that we don’t have to be rich or powerful or great to be filled with pride. Sometimes those who have the least reason for pride have the most of it.

ii. The Edomites boasted in their natural defenses. The ancient city of Petra - once the capital city of Edom, known as Sela - had amazing defenses. It is a city carved into the rock, accessible by a narrow canyon almost a mile long.

At the end of the canyon there is a spectacular city carved in stone, and seemingly incapable of being conquered by any army.

iii. The Edomites boasted in their wisdom. The men of Edom - especially of the city **Teman** - were noted for their wisdom. The phrase *men of the East* in the Old Testament often refers to men from Edom, and passages like 1Ki_4:30 declare the great wisdom of the *men of the East*. As well, Jer_49:7 says of Edom: *Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished?* This was another source of pride for the Edomites.

iv. The Edomites boasted in their alliances and trusted in their allies - their *confederacy*, the *men at peace with you* (Oba_1:7). They thought that their alliances made them strong, and they were proud because of that strength.

g. **From there I will bring you down:** The sobering truth about our pride is that God can **bring** us **down** anytime. He can shatter our proud deception and bring us low.

2. (Oba_1:5-9) God's judgment against Edom will be complete.

"If thieves had come to you, if robbers by night; Oh, how you will be cut off! - Would they not have stolen till they had enough? If grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not have left *some* gleanings? Oh, how Esau shall be searched out! *How* his hidden treasures shall be sought after! All the men in your confederacy shall force you to the border; the men at peace with you shall deceive you *and* prevail against you. *Those who eat* your bread shall lay a trap for you. No one is aware of it. Will I not in that day," says the LORD, "Even destroy the wise *men* from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau? Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau may be cut off by slaughter."

a. **Would they not have stolen till they had enough?** Obadiah says that the judgment coming upon Edom will be far

worse than what happens when **robbers** come and steal, because they usually stop when they have **enough**. The

judgment coming against Edom will be far more complete (**everyone from the mountains of Esau may be cut off by slaughter**).

i. The Edomites were proud of their great natural defenses, but God would break their pride and bring them low.

b. **Men at peace with you shall deceive you:** When God brings judgment against Edom, they will know the sting of treachery against them. The alliances they once trusted in would come to nothing, and they would be double-crossed by their former friends.

i. The Edomites were proud of their political alliances, but God would break their pride and bring them low.

c. **Destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau:** The Edomites were renowned for their great wisdom, but God would bring such great judgment that even their wise men would be destroyed.

i. The Edomites were proud of their reputation for wisdom, but God would break their pride and bring them low.

d. Oba_1:1-9 is paralleled remarkably in Jer_49:7-22, so Jeremiah probably had Obadiah's prophecy before him as he wrote and ministered.

3. (Oba_1:10-14) Why judgment is coming against Edom.

"For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. In the day that you stood on the other side; in the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem; even you *were* as one of them. But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity; nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; nor should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their

affliction in the day of their calamity, nor laid *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained in the day of distress.”

a. **For your violence against your brother Jacob:** The family lines of both Israel and Edom go back to a common ancestor - Isaac. Esau (Edom) was the **brother** of **Jacob** (Israel). This made Edom’s sin against Israel all the worse.

i. Some sins become worse depending on whom we sin against. It is sin to treat someone else badly; it is *worse* to treat *a brother or sister in Jesus* badly. It is sin to speak harshly to anyone; it is *worse* to speak harshly to your *husband or wife*.

b. **In that day you stood on the other side:** What did Edom do when **strangers** attacked Judah and **foreigners entered his gates**? *Nothing*. They stood by and cheered for Judah’s misery (**nor should you have rejoiced**).

i. Sometimes doing *nothing* is a great sin. Num_32:23 speaks of the sin that *will find you out*, and the sin it speaks of is the sin of doing *nothing*.

ii. Edom actually did worse than nothing; they **rejoiced** over another’s misfortune and suffering and used it as an occasion to exalt themselves (**nor should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress**).

c. **Nor laid hands on their substance:** Edom’s sin started with doing *nothing*, then progressed to *pride* over Judah’s distress. Soon, they took advantage of their brother Judah’s misfortune and **laid hands on their substance**.

d. **You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped:** The final progression of Edom’s sin was worst of all - they joined in the attack against vulnerable Judah. When they encountered people from Judah fleeing southward from the attacking army, they killed them (**cut off**) or gave them over to the

enemy as prisoners (**delivered up those among them who remained**).

i. "Sin proceeds by degrees; neither is any man at his worst at first." (Trapp)

e. **In the day of his captivity . . . in the day of distress . . . in the day of calamity**: All in all, Edom treated God's people terribly when **distress** and **calamity** came upon them. For all this, God's judgment was coming upon them.

- First they did nothing
- Then they rejoiced in their distress and calamity
- Then they took advantage of their vulnerable state
- Then they joined in the violence against God's people

i. Are we guilty of the same - or worse - when we see others in **distress** or **calamity**? If so, God sees it as sin and He must deal with it in our life.

B. Deliverance on Mount Zion.

1. (Oba_1:15-16) A promise of judgment against Edom.

"For the day of the LORD upon all the nations *is* near; as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head. For as you drank on my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yes, they shall drink, and swallow, and they shall be as though they had never been."

a. **The day of the LORD upon all the nations is near**: God wants Edom to know that though distress and calamity came upon Judah, it can and will come upon Edom also. That day is **near**.

b. **As you have done, it shall be done to you**: God will give simple *justice* to the Edomites, no more and no less. What they did to the people of Judah will also be done to them. The same principle is true for us, so if we want mercy from God,

we do well to give mercy to others.

i. There is a sense in which God's judgment against Edom was just the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham in

Gen_12:3 : *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.* The Edomites cursed Israel, so they were cursed. If we want to be blessed, we should bless the Jewish people.

2. (Oba_1:17-20) God will use Israel to bring judgment against Edom.

“But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau *shall be* stubble; they shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall *remain* of the house of Esau,” for the LORD has spoken. The South shall possess the mountains of Esau, and the Lowland shall possess Philistia. They shall possess the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Samaria.

Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead. And the captives of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess the land* of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath. The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the South.

a. **On Mount Zion there shall be deliverance:** The trials and burdens among God’s people are only temporary, because among them **there shall be deliverance.** However, the attack coming against Edom will be different - Israel

will be the **fire** and they will be the **stubble**, and Edom will be completely devoured.

i. The word of the LORD through Obadiah proved true. The Edomites fought side by side with the Jews the rebellion against Rome in 66-70 A.D. and were crushed by Rome, never to be heard of as a people again. The predictions of Oba_1:10; Oba_1:18 were precisely fulfilled. You just won’t meet an Edomite today.

b. **The South shall possess the mountains of Esau:** Obadiah looks forward to a coming day when Israel will occupy

and **possess** the land that once belonged to **Esau**. Though the modern borders of Israel do not encompass the ancient lands of Edom, we can trust that they one day will, either in this age or in the age to come.

i. **The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions:**

Possessing these other lands can only happen when we first possess what is ours. God has given us a rich heritage of *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ* (Eph_1:3), but how much do we actually **possess**? God wants His people to **possess their possessions**.

3. (Oba_1:21) Saviors come to Mount Zion.

Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

a. **Saviors shall come to Mount Zion:** The idea isn't that there are many **saviors** in an ultimate sense. Here, the word "**saviors**" has the sense of "deliverers." The contrast is plain; Edom will be completely destroyed, and no **saviors** shall help her, but **saviors shall come to Mount Zion**.

b. **To judge the mountains of Esau:** They will **judge the mountains of Esau** in at least three ways:

- The presence of deliverers is a judgment against Edom, because Edom will have no deliverers
- The judges will rule over the territory of Edom
- The judges will actually sit in judgment over Edom and their sins

c. **And the kingdom shall be the LORD's:** The brief prophecy of Obadiah ends on this high note. The Edomites seemed to have their day against God's people but at the end of it all, **the kingdom shall be the LORD's**. He knows how to take care of God's people and to advance His kingdom in a glorious way.

i. This note of encouragement may be the central purpose for this prophecy of Obadiah. We wonder if it ever had much of a reading in the streets or palaces of Edom; but it certainly was received as welcome encouragement

among the suffering people of God. Obadiah tells all God's people: "Don't worry about those who ignore your need, those who rejoice at your problems, those who take advantage of your crises, those join their hands with others in attacking you. I will take care of them."
(Oba 1:2) The LORD says,⁹ "Look! I will¹⁰ make you a weak nation;¹¹

you will be greatly despised!
(Oba 1:3) Your presumptuous heart¹² has deceived you —
you who reside in the safety of the rocky cliffs,¹³
whose home is high in the mountains.¹⁴

You think to yourself,¹⁵

'No one can¹⁶ bring me down to the ground!'¹⁷
(Oba 1:4) Even if you were to soar high like an eagle,¹⁸
even if you¹⁹ were to make your nest among the stars,

I can bring you down even from there!" says the LORD.
(Oba 1:5) "If thieves came to rob you²⁰ during the night,²¹

they would steal only as much as they wanted!²²

If grape pickers came to harvest your vineyards,²³

they would leave some behind for the poor!²⁴

But you will be totally destroyed!²⁵

(Oba 1:6) How the people of Esau²⁶ will be thoroughly plundered!²⁷

Their²⁸ hidden valuables will be ransacked!²⁹

(Oba 1:7) All your allies³⁰ will force³¹ you from your homeland!³²

Your treaty partners³³ will deceive you and overpower you.

Your trusted friends³⁴ will set an ambush³⁵ for³⁶ you

that will take you by surprise!³⁷

(Oba 1:8) At that time,"³⁸ the LORD says,

"I will destroy the wise sages of Edom!³⁹

the advisers⁴⁰ from Esau's mountain!⁴¹

(Oba 1:9) Your warriors will be shattered, O Teman,⁴²

so that⁴³ everyone⁴⁴ will be destroyed⁴⁵ from Esau's mountain!

(Oba 1:10) ***Edom's Treachery Against Judah***

"Because⁴⁶ you violently slaughtered⁴⁷ your relatives,⁴⁸ the people of Jacob,⁴⁹

shame will cover you, and you will be destroyed⁵⁰ forever.

(Oba 1:11) You stood aloof⁵¹ while strangers took his army⁵² captive,

and foreigners advanced to his gates.⁵³

When they cast lots⁵⁴ over Jerusalem,⁵⁵

you behaved as though you were in league⁵⁶ with them.

(Oba 1:12) You should not⁵⁷ have gloated⁵⁸ when your relatives⁵⁹ suffered calamity.⁶⁰

You should not have rejoiced over the people of Judah when they were destroyed.⁶¹

You should not have boasted⁶² when they suffered adversity.⁶³

(Oba 1:13) You should not have entered the city⁶⁴ of my people when they experienced distress.⁶⁵

You should not have joined⁶⁶ in gloating over their misfortune when they suffered distress.⁶⁷

You should not have looted⁶⁸ their wealth when they endured distress.⁶⁹

(Oba 1:14) You should not have stood at the fork in the road⁷⁰ to slaughter⁷¹ those trying to escape.⁷²

You should not have captured their refugees when they suffered adversity.⁷³

(Oba 1:15) ***The Coming Day of the Lord***

"For the day of the LORD⁷⁴ is approaching⁷⁵ for all the nations!⁷⁶

Just as you have done, so it will be done to you.

You will get exactly what your deeds deserve.⁷⁷

(Oba 1:16) For just as you⁷⁸ have drunk⁷⁹ on my holy mountain,

so all the nations will drink continually.⁸⁰

They will drink, and they will gulp down;

they will be as though they had never been.

(Oba 1:17) But on Mount Zion there will be a remnant of those who escape,⁸¹

and it will be a holy place once again.

The descendants⁸² of Jacob will conquer⁸³

those who had conquered them.⁸⁴

(Oba 1:18) The descendants of Jacob will be a fire,

and the descendants of Joseph a flame.

The descendants of Esau will be like stubble.

They will burn them up and devour them.

There will not be a single survivor⁸⁵ of the descendants of Esau!"

Indeed, the LORD has spoken it.

(Oba 1:19) The people of the Negev⁸⁶ will take possession⁸⁷ of Esau's mountain,

and the people of the Shephelah⁸⁸ will take

possession⁸⁹ of the land of⁹⁰ the Philistines.

They will also take possession of the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria,

and the people of Benjamin will take possession⁹¹ of Gilead.⁹²

(Oba 1:20) The exiles of this fortress⁹³ of the people of Israel

will take possession⁹⁴ of what belongs to

the people of Canaan, as far as Zarephath,⁹⁵

and the exiles of Jerusalem⁹⁶ who are in Sepharad⁹⁷

will take possession of the towns of the Negev.

(Oba 1:21) Those who have been delivered⁹⁸ will go up on Mount Zion

in order to rule over⁹⁹ Esau's mountain.

Then the LORD will reign as King!¹⁰⁰